

I am a musician living in Austin, Texas, and I wish to make my views on media consolidation known. Several weeks ago a number of well-known recording artists signed a letter to FCC Chairman Michael Powell insisting that the public have a full opportunity to review and comment on the proposed changes to media ownership rules. In their letter they cited several research projects which contradict Chairman Powell's apparent conviction that lifting limitations to media ownership will be good for the industry and the American Public. I agree with these findings. I think further consolidation will be detrimental to listeners, viewers, my profession, and democracy in general.

Musicians should know! Since the 1996 Telecommunications Act which deregulated the radio industry, the resulting consolidation has had undesirable effects on our favorite way of distributing music. Two companies, Clear Channel and Viacom, now control 45% of industry revenues and their actions have stifled competition, caused ticket prices to soar, reduced local programming, decreased variety of playlists, and encouraged a new form of payola.

I urge you to retain the current ownership rules. If I had my preference you would reinstate many of the limitations which were abolished by the 1996 Act. I want rules which benefit many citizens, not simply a few owners.

Sincerely,

Aeron Riordon